

Message Text

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SUBJ: STEVEN FORD OFFICIALLY OPENS CALGARY STAMPEDE
BICENTENNIAL PROGRAM

REF: 76 CALGARY 286

1. THE 1976 CALGARY STAMPEDE, WITH ITS SALUTE TO THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL, WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED FRIDAY, JULY 9, BY STEVEN FORD, SON OF PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD. MR. FORD PERFORMED THE OPENING CEREMONIES AT AN EVENING EVENT BEFORE APPROX. 25 THOUSAND SPECTATORS. EARLIER IN THE DAY HE HAD SERVED AS MARSHALL OF THE PARADE, SEEN BY APPROX. 300 THOUSAND CALGARIANS AND VISITORS. COMPLETE FORD PROGRAM SAMEAS THAT SUBMITTED IN REFTEL.

2. U.S. AMBASSADOR THOMAS ENDERS AND MRS. ENDERS ALSO WERE OFFICIAL GUESTS AT THE STAMPEDE EVENT. AMBASSADOR ENDERS SPOKE INFORMALLY FROM THE STAGE AT THE EVENING STAMPEDE SHOW AND CALLED FOR A CHEER FROM AMERICANS PRESENT FOR CANADA. STEWART BARKER, PRESIDENT OF THE CALGARY EXHIBITION AND STAMPEDE, THEN CALLED FOR A SIMILAR CHEER FROM CANADIANS FOR THEIR AMERICAN FRIENDS. MRS. ENDERS EARLIER HAD OPENED FLARE SQUARE, THE CENTER OF THE SALUTE TO THE U.S. THEME AT
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THE STAMPEDE GROUNDS.

3. THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROGRAM IN CALGARY SUPPORTING THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM POSSIBLY WAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AND THE LARGEST IN TERMS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION HELD BY ANY CITY OUTSIDE THE U.S. THE PRE-STAMPEDE PROGRAM INCLUDED U.S.-CANADIAN SPORTS COMPETITION, SPECIAL SERVICES IN CALGARY CHURCHES, AND A LARGE U.S.-CANADIAN ENTERTAINMENT EVENT FOR APPROX. SEVEN THOUSAND PEOPLE AT CALGARY'S HERITAGE PARK.

4. THE SALUTE TO THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL THEME WAS SELECTED BY THE STAMPEDE BOARD 10 MONTHS AGO, AND RECEIVED SOME CRITICISM AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, AS PLANNING PROGRESSED, THERE WAS LITTLE UNFAVORABLE REACTION, AND THERE WERE NO DEMONSTRATIONS, BANNERS OR INCIDENCES OF ANTI-U.S. NATURE. THE CALGARY HERALD DESCRIBED THE OFFICIAL OPENING AS A STERLING EXAMPLE OF INTERNATIONAL GOOD WILL BETWEEN CANADA AND THE U.S., AND THE OPENING PROGRAM FEATURED A MAMMOTH 60 MINUTE PATRIOTIC STAGE PRODUCTION FEATURING 400 PARTICIPANTS AND THE USE OF OVER 100 U.S. AND CANADIAN FLAGS.

5. STEVEN FORD'S PARTICIPATION WAS EXCELLENT. THE 20-YEAR THE YOUNGEST SON OF THE PRESIDENT WAS ON HIS FIRST VISIT OUT OF THE U.S. AND HE GAINED APPLAUSE WHEREVER HE WENT. THE CALGARY HERALD DESCRIBED HIM AS QUOTE A COWBOY HIMSELF, FLASHING A WINNING SMILE AT THE THOUSANDS OF STAMPEDE PATRONS AND EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR THE SALUTE TO THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL UNQUOTE. MR. FORD'S PICTURES WERE CARRIED BY BOTH CALGARY NEWSPAPERS, AND HE DESCRIBED HIS MEETINGS WITH CALGARIANS AS QUOTE SUPER FRIENDLY UNQUOTE. IN ADDITION TO HIS STAMPEDE ACTIVITIES, MR. FORD VISITED THE U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL IN CALGARY, WAS NAMED AN HONORARY CITIZEN OF THE CITY, AND OPENED THE SPRINGBANK AIR SHOW BEING HELD AT THE SAME TIME AS THE STAMPEDE.

6. COMMENT: IN THE OPINION OF THIS REPORTING OFFICER, AS SUPPORTED BY COMMENTS FROM STAMPEDE OFFICIALS, STEVEN FORD'S VISIT TO CALGARY WAS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS BOTH FOR THE STAMPEDE AND IN THE BETTERMENT OF U.S.-CANADIAN RELATIONS.
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HANDSOME, YOUNG, WESTERN IN APPEARANCE, AND FRIENDLY IN OUTLOOK, HE FITTED INTO THE CALGARY SCENE WITH PERFECTION. HE WAS PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE IN HIS INFORMAL MIXINGS WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC, STAMPEDE OFFICIALS, AND THE COWBOY STARS OF THE RODEO. THE PRESENCE OF AMBASSADOR AND MRS. ENDERS ALSO CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO THE GOOD WILL OBVIOUSLY PRESENT, AND THEY PARTICIPATED WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND MOST EFFECTIVELY IN THE VARIOUS EVENTS STRETCHING OVER THE THREE-DAY PERIOD.

AT A TIME WHEN THE U.S. IS CRITICISED IN MANY PARTS OF THE
WORLD, IT WAS GRATIFYING TO SEE THE WARMTH AND AFFECTION
WITH WHICH THE PEOPLE OF CALGARY GREETED THEIR GUESTS FROM
SOUTH OF THE BORDER IN A MANNER THAT MATCHED THE OFFICIAL
HOSPITALITY WITH WHICH WASHINGTON RECENTLY WELCOMED TWO OF
ALBERTA S MAJOR STATESMEN, JOE CLARK, NATIONAL LEADER OF
THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, AND PETER LOUGHEED.
PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE.

7. PRESS CLIPPINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS ARE BEING SENT UNDER
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